

## **Central Landfill-Management Action Committee Meeting #2- November 30, 1999- Draft Meeting Minutes**

Attendees: Mayor William Macera (Johnston), Senator William Tocco (Johnston), Representative Alfred Russo (Johnston), Representative Beatrice Lanzi (Cranston), Representative Carol Mumford (Scituate), Representative Aram Garabedian (Cranston), Councilwoman Mary Cerra (Johnston), Councilman Michael Fagnoli (Johnston), Ms. Lisa Gargaro, Mr. William Major, Mr. James Allam (Deputy Executive Director, RIRRC), Mr. Michael Hill (EPA), Ms. Stacy Greendlinger (Facilitator-EPA), Mr. Louis Vinagro (President, New England Ecological Development, Inc.), Attorney Robert Miller, Mr. Robert Sandberg, Mr. Terrence Gray (Assistant Director, DEM)

Ms. Greendlinger opened by summarizing the proposed agenda for the meeting (copy attached) and explained that the main goal of this second meeting was to prioritize the approximately 70 issues identified at the first meeting. No comments were raised on the proposed agenda and the committee accepted it.

She reviewed the ground rules for the meetings, which were outlined in a handout from the first meeting and explained that the structure of these meetings allowed for public comment from people not on the committee during the brainstorming session. The members of the committee then introduced themselves and explained their affiliations and interests.

The draft meeting minutes prepared by DEM from the first meeting were reviewed. Mr. Major expressed his concern with DEM writing up the minutes and requested that a stenographer be provided for the next meeting. DEM agreed to provide a stenographer for the next two meetings. Representative Garabedian suggested that other committee members investigate providing the stenographer for subsequent meetings. Mr. Major also agreed to bring a tape recorder to the next meeting.

The first issue raised was a follow-up on the degree of citizen participation pending from the last meeting. Lisa Gargaro explained that she had been actively recruiting new members and introduced Mr. Robert Sandberg, who had expressed interest in participating in their telephone discussion. Representative Garabedian introduced Attorney Robert Miller from Cranston, who agreed to serve as that community's citizen participant. Mr. Louis Vinagro was also invited to sit on the committee both as a resident and businessman in Johnston and as the president of New England Ecological Development (N.E.E.D.) Inc., a neighboring solid waste management and recycling facility. It was agreed that the committee would continue to search for a citizen representative from Scituate. The group was comfortable with the level of citizen participation on the committee but agreed to revisit the issue in the future if necessary.

Mayor William Macera expressed his concern over the lack of representation from the Rhode Island Department of Health. Many other committee members echoed this concern. Both DEM and EPA agreed to follow up on this issue and strongly express the need for future DOH participation.

Ms. Greendlinger revisited the draft mission statement distributed to the committee at the first meeting. Members of the committee were asked for any comments on the draft. Mr. Allam suggested that the name of the committee be changed from the "Central Landfill Action Committee" to the "Environmental Management District Action Committee". Several committee members expressed strong concerns over any name changes meant to de-emphasize the importance of the Central Landfill as a source of problems in the community.

Mr. Major strongly expressed the need to focus on the RIRRC. Representative Garabedian added that other facilities were referenced in the first meeting as being contributors to the problems. He also mentioned pig farms, the Plainfield Pike transfer station, and N.E.E.D.

The committee briefly debated three proposed names; Central Landfill Action Committee, Central Landfill and N.E.E.D. Action Committee, and the Environmental Management District Action Committee. In the end, it was agreed that the name would simply be the Action Committee until the scope of the committee's discussions is better defined.

The mission statement was then reviewed. The committee made two changes. First, the phrase "and other environmental issues impacting the community" was added to address the issues raised by the public that were not directly related to the landfill. Second, a goal was added for the committee to provide advice on administrative or legislative actions necessary to correct the problems identified and to provide advice on the enforcement of existing laws and regulations. EPA agreed to work the changes into a new mission statement.

Ms. Gargaro raised a problem she had with statements attributed to RIRRC Executive Director Sherry Mulhearn in a Providence Journal article the day of the meeting. She raised particular concerns over RIRRC's stated intent (per the article) to step up the use of Recovermat to prolong the life of the landfill. Further discussion of this point was tabled until communications issues were discussed.

Several operating procedures for future meetings were then discussed. The committee agreed that future meetings would be held at 6:30 PM every two weeks on Tuesday nights. The next meeting was scheduled for December 14, 1999. The committee agreed that the physical format of the meeting was appropriate and that facilitation of future meetings was needed.

Senator William Tocco asked whether the committee should select a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary and whether the committee should record formal votes on issues. Representative Garabedian noted that it may be appropriate to record formal votes where necessary but not on every issue rose for discussion. Representative Russo asked if there was any budget for the committee. There was agreement that there was no budget and the representatives said they would look into a legislative grant to support the process. No action was taken on whether the committee needed to select officers.

The committee then discussed several communications issues. First, it was agreed that a generic press release announcing the meeting should be developed and reviewed by the committee members. DEM agreed to prepare the generic press release for review by the committee and to distribute future meeting notices to the newspapers in the agreed-upon format.

Ms. Greendlinger explained that the meeting agendas are distributed as draft and any member of the committee can add items to the agenda. Several members requested that an information repository be established in libraries in Cranston and Johnston. DEM agreed to start working on this. A web site was also suggested for those people that can't easily get to the library. DEM stated that it was working on a link off its site to make information from the committee publicly available. Councilwoman Cerra asked that the number of complaints and complainant's names be added to that list and DEM agreed to look into that.

Mr. Allam suggested that the committee agree on measures of success in order to communicate the committee's progress to the public. Mr. Hill requested that RIRRC prepare a fact sheet on what they had done to date to serve, in part, as the baseline for developing those measures of success.

Representative Russo requested copies of the RIRRC and N.E.E.D. annual reports. Mr. Allam and Mr. Vinagro agreed to provide their respective reports. A tour of the area was suggested but further discussion on this topic was tabled based on time limitations.

The members of the committee and public were asked for input on mechanisms for better communications. The following ideas were raised:

- Potential Saturday Meetings
- Better responsiveness to phone calls
- More public participation during discussions as opposed to the end of the meeting
- Scheduling adequate time for meetings
- Ways to communicate with people on the committee
- Establishing the web page
- Better sharing of results on inspections
- Availability of committee members before the meetings
- Ability to submit questions or comments electronically through web page
- Give Mr. Vinagro the five minutes of explanation he requested
- Better explanation on out-of-state vehicles
- Representation from the Health Department
- Televising meetings on local cable access
- Need place to call to file a complaint
- Need to arrange a bus tour

Ms. Greendlinger then wrapped up the meeting and summarized the proposed agenda for the next meeting. Issues to be addressed at the next meeting include: amended mission statement, prioritization of issues from first meeting, DEM update (in interests of time, DEM agreed to provide a written fact sheet on this), Mr. Vinagro, Tour Bus, and future efforts to approach Cox Cable.

The meeting closed at approximately 8:45 PM.